UNITED
NATIONS

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General Assembly

Distr.
LIMITED

A/CONF.165/PC.3/L.2
12 February 1996

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS
CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (HABITAT II)
Third session
New York, 5-16 February 1996
Agenda item 7

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE

Draft report

Rapporteur: Ms. Marjorie ULLOA (Ecuador)

I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. Opening and duration of the session

1. The Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) held its third session at United Nations Headquarters from 5 to 16 February 1996. The Committee held __ meetings (1st to ___). The Preparatory Committee decided to establish two working groups, which held a number of informal meetings.

2. The Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) opened the session and made a statement.

3. The Secretary-General of the United Nations addressed the Committee.

4. Statements were made by the Secretary-General of the Conference and Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), the Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund.

B. Attendance

5. The following States were represented: [to be completed].

6. The observer for Palestine also attended the session.

7. The following United Nations programmes were represented: United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Population Fund.

8. The following specialized agencies were represented: International Labour Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Health Organization, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Meteorological Organization.

9. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented: Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation, Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee, Commonwealth of Independent States, Council of Europe, European Economic Community, International Organization for Migration, League of Arab States, International Committee of the Red Cross, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Organization of African Unity, Organization of the Islamic Conference.

10. A number of non-governmental organizations also attended the session [to be completed].

11. Representatives of local authorities attended the session [to be completed].

C. Agenda

12. At its 1st plenary meeting, on 5 February, the Committee adopted the provisional agenda contained in document A/CONF.165/PC.3/1 and Add.1, which read as follows:

1. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

2. Accreditation of non-governmental organizations and local authorities in accordance with the rules for their participation set out in decision II/4 of the Preparatory Committee.

3. Status of preparations for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II):

   (a) Trust funds;

   (b) Status of review reports and other substantive documentation to be submitted to the Conference;

   (c) Public information programme;

   (d) Partner forums;

   (e) Organization of the Conference, including rules of procedure;

(f) Best practices and exhibitions.

4. Outcome of the Conference: draft statement of principles and commitments and global plan of action.

5. Provisional agenda of the Conference.

6. Other matters.

7. Adoption of the report of the Preparatory Committee on its third session.

13. At the same meeting, the Preparatory Committee established two working groups of the whole and allocated agenda to them as follows: Working Group I: agenda item 3; Working Group II: agenda item 4.

14. Statements were made by the representatives of Egypt, Costa Rica (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77), the United States of America, Chile, Italy (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union), Senegal, Zimbabwe, Jordan and Benin.

15. Working Group I held __ meetings, from 5 to __ February, and Working Group II held __ meetings, from 5 to __ February. The recommendations of both working groups will be incorporated in the final report.

D. Adoption of the report of the Preparatory Committee

16. At its __ plenary meeting, on __ February, the Preparatory Committee adopted its report.

II. ACCREDITATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RULES FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION SET OUT IN DECISION II/4 OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE

A. Accreditation of non-governmental organizations

17. At its 1st plenary meeting, on 5 February, the Preparatory Committee accredited to the Preparatory Committee and to the Conference the non-governmental organizations listed in A/CONF.165/PC.3/2 and Add.1.

18. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 7 February, at the request of a number of delegations, the Preparatory Committee decided to defer further consideration of the item to its next meeting.

19. Statements were made by the representatives of Norway, India and the United States of America.

20. At its __ and __ plenary meetings, on __ and __ February, the Preparatory Committee accredited to the Preparatory Committee and to the Conference the non-governmental organizations listed in A/CONF.165/PC.3/2/Add.3 and 4.

B. Accreditation of local authorities

21. At its 1st plenary meeting, on 5 February, after the representative of the United States of America raised a question to which the Chairman responded, the Preparatory Committee accredited to the Preparatory Committee and to the Conference the international associations of local authorities listed in A/CONF.165/PC.3/2/Add.2.

III. DISCUSSION ON AGENDA ITEMS 3 AND 4

A. Plenary

General debate

22. The Preparatory Committee held a general debate on items 3 and 4 of its agenda at its 1st to 3rd and __ plenary meetings, on 5, 7 and __ February.

23. At the 1st plenary meeting, on 5 February, statements were made by the representatives of Colombia (as Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement), Costa Rica (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77), Italy (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union) and Turkey, the host country.

24. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 5 February, statements were made by the representatives of Chile, Sweden, China, Malaysia, India, Jordan, Nepal and the Sudan.

25. Also at the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Meteorological Organization, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Volunteers programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Rights.

26. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 7 February, a multimedia presentation of the best practices database was made to the Committee. The representatives of Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland made statements.

27. At the same meeting, the representative of Ghana, Mayor of Accra, the representative of Nepal, Mayor of Kathmandu, and the representatives of Jordan and Ecuador made statements.

28. Also at the same meeting, the representative of Kenya made a statement.

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Agenda item 4

OUTCOME OF THE CONFERENCE: DRAFT STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES AND COMMITMENTS AND GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION

Preamble (paras. 1-12)

(Section I of the draft Habitat Agenda)

Text submitted by Working Group II on the basis of negotiations held on document A/CONF.165/PC.3/4

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I. PREAMBLE

1. We recognize the imperative need to improve the quality of human settlements which profoundly affects our daily lives and the well-being of our people. The development of sustainable human settlement and shelter strategies that foster economic and social development and that protect the environment is the central theme of the Habitat Agenda. Better standards of living for all and higher cultural values will be achieved through solidarity and cooperation within and between countries, and through effective partnerships at all levels.

2. The purpose of the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) is to address two themes of equal global importance: "Adequate shelter for all" and "Sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world". Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development, including shelter for all and sustainable human settlements, and they are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.

As to the first theme, a large segment of the world's population lacks shelter and sanitation, particularly in developing countries. We recognize that access to safe and healthy shelter and basic services is essential to a person's physical, psychological, social and economic well-being and should be a fundamental part of our urgent actions for the more than 1 billion people without decent living conditions. Our present objective is to achieve adequate shelter for all and especially for the deprived urban and rural poor through an enabling approach to the development and improvement of shelter that is environmentally sound.

As to the second theme, sustainable development of human settlements combines economic development, social and cultural progress, and environmental protection, with full respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, and offers a means to achieving a world of greater stability and peace.

2 bis. [Democracy, and transparent, representative and accountable governance and administration in all sectors of society are indispensable foundations for the realization of sustainable development. However, the lack of development and the existence of widespread absolute poverty inhibit the full and effective enjoyment of human rights and render fragile democracy and popular participation.]

3. Recognizing the global nature of these issues, the international community, in convening Habitat II, has decided that a concerted global approach could greatly enhance progress towards achieving these goals. The cross-national and global impacts of unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, particularly in industrialized countries, environmental degradation, demographic changes, widespread and persistent poverty, and social and economic inequality are clearly visible. The sooner communities, local governments, partnerships among the public, and private and community sectors join efforts to create comprehensive, bold and innovative strategies for shelter and human settlements, the better the prospects will be for the safety, health and well-being of people

and the brighter the outlook for solutions to global environment and social problems.

4. Having considered the experience since the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat), held in Vancouver, Canada, in 1976, Habitat II reaffirms the results from relevant recent world conferences and has developed them into an agenda for human settlements: the Habitat Agenda. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development - The Earth Summit - held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, produced Agenda 21. At this Conference, the international community agreed to a framework for the sustainable development of human settlements. Each of the other conferences, including the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995); the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995); the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994); the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (Barbados, 1994); and the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993), as well as the preceding World Summit on Children (New York, 1990) and the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, 1989) also address important social and economic issues, including components of the sustainable development agenda, for which successful implementation requires action at the local, national and international levels. The Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, adopted in 1988, which emphasizes the need for improved production and delivery of shelter for revised national housing policies, and for an enabling strategy, offers useful guidelines for the realization of adequate shelter for all in the next century.

5. During the course of history, urbanization has been associated with economic and social progress, the promotion of literacy and education, the improvement of the general state of health, greater access to social services, and cultural, political and religious participation. Democratization has enhanced such access and meaningful participation and involvement for civil society actors, and for public-private partnerships; decentralized, participatory planning and management are important features of a successful urban future. Cities and towns have been engines of growth and incubators of civilization and have facilitated the evolution of knowledge, culture and tradition, as well as of industry and commerce. Urban settlements, properly planned and managed, hold the promise for human development and the protection of the world's natural resources through their ability to support large numbers of people while limiting their impact on the natural environment. The growth of cities and towns causes social, economic and environmental changes that go beyond city boundaries. Habitat II deals with all settlements - large, medium and small - and reaffirms the need for universal improvements in living and working conditions.

6. To overcome current problems and to ensure future progress in the improvement of economic, social and environmental conditions in human settlements, we must begin with a recognition of the challenges facing cities and towns. According to current projections, by the turn of the century, more than 3 billion people - one half of the world's population - will live and work in urban areas. The most serious problems confronting cities and towns and their inhabitants include inadequate financial resources, lack of employment opportunities, spreading homelessness and expansion of squatter settlements, increased poverty and a widening gap between rich and poor, growing insecurity

and rising crime rates, inadequate and deteriorating building stock, services and infrastructure, lack of health and educational facilities, improper land use, insecure land tenure, rising traffic congestion, increasing pollution, lack of green spaces, inadequate water supply and sanitation, uncoordinated urban development, and an increasing vulnerability to disaster. All of these have seriously challenged the capacities of governments, particularly those of developing countries, at all levels to realize economic development, social development and environmental protection, which are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development and are the framework for our efforts to achieve a higher quality of life for all people. Rapid rates of international and internal migration to cities and towns, as well as population growth in cities and towns, and unsustainable patterns of production and consumption raise these problems in especially acute forms. In these cities and towns, large sections of the world's urban population live in inadequate conditions and are confronted with serious problems, including environmental problems, that are exacerbated by inadequate planning and managerial capacities, lack of investment and technology, and insufficient mobilization and inappropriate allocation of financial resources, as well as by a lack of social and economic opportunities. In the case of international migration, migrants have particular needs for housing and basic services, education, employment, and social integration without a loss of cultural identity, and they are to be given adequate protection and attention within host countries.

7. In the process of globalization and growing interdependence, rural settlements represent a great challenge and opportunity for renewed developmental initiatives at all levels and in all fields. Many rural settlements, however, are facing a lack or an inadequacy of economic opportunities, especially employment, and of infrastructure and services, particularly those related to water, sanitation, health, education, communication, transportation and energy. Appropriate efforts and technologies for rural development can help to reduce, inter alia, imbalances, unsustainable practices, poverty, isolation, environmental pollution and insecure land tenure. Such efforts can contribute to improving the linkage of rural settlements with the mainstream of economic, social and cultural life, to assuring sustainable communities and safe environments, and to reducing pressures on urban growth.

8. Cities, towns and rural settlements are linked through the movements of goods, resources and people. Urban-rural linkages have a crucial importance for the sustainability of human settlements. As rural population growth has outpaced the generation of employment and economic opportunities, rural-to-urban migration has steadily increased, particularly in developing countries, which has put enormous pressure on urban infrastructure and services already under serious stress. It is urgent to eradicate rural poverty and to improve the quality of living conditions, as well as to create employment and educational opportunities in rural settlements, regional centres and secondary cities. Full advantage must be taken of the complementary contributions and linkages of rural and urban areas by balancing their different economic, social and environmental requirements.

9. More people than ever are living in absolute poverty and without adequate shelter. Inadequate shelter and homelessness are growing plights in many countries, threatening standards of health, security and even life itself.

[Everyone should be entitled to an adequate standard of living, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions.]

9 bis. The rapidly increasing number of displaced persons, including refugees, other displaced persons in need of international protection and internally displaced persons, as a result of natural and human-made disasters in many regions of the world, is aggravating the shelter crisis, highlighting the need for a speedy solution to the problem on a durable basis, [for which international cooperation and assistance are needed].

9 ter The needs of children and youth have to be taken fully into account [recognizing the rights, duties and responsibilities of parents and other persons legally responsible for children, consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child]. Special attention needs to be paid to participatory processes dealing with the shaping of cities, towns and neighbourhoods; this is in order to secure the living conditions of children and of youth and to make use of their insight, creativity and thoughts on the environment. Special attention must be paid to shelter needs of vulnerable children, such as street children, refugee children and children who are victims of sexual exploitation.

9 quatter. In shelter and urban development and management policies, particular attention should be given to the needs and participation of indigenous people. These policies should fully respect their identity and culture [and support their aspirations for social justice and provide an environment that enables them to participate in social, economic and political life].

9 quin. Women have an important role to play in the attainment of sustainable human settlements. Nevertheless, as a result of a number of factors, including the persistent and increasing burden of poverty of women and gender discrimination, women face particular constraints in obtaining adequate shelter and in fully participating in decision-making related to sustainable human settlements. The empowerment of women and their full and equal participation in political, social and economic life, the improvement of health, and the alleviation of poverty are essential to achieving sustainable human settlements.

10. Although many countries, particularly developing countries, lack legal, institutional, financial, technological and human resources to respond adequately to rapid urbanization, many local authorities are taking on these challenges with open, accountable and effective leadership and are eager to bring people into the sustainable development process. Enabling structures that facilitate independent initiative and creativity, and that encourage the wide range of partnerships, including with the private sector, and within and between countries, should be promoted. Furthermore, empowering all people, especially vulnerable and disadvantaged groups and people living in poverty, to participate equally and effectively in all activities related to human settlements is the basis for civic engagement, and should be facilitated by the national authorities. Indeed, the Habitat Agenda provides a framework to enable people to take responsibility for the promotion and creation of sustainable human settlements.

10 bis. [Human settlements problems are of multidimensional nature that has its main roots in poverty and underdevelopment and, in many countries, are aggravated by the scarcity of resources. It is recognized that human settlements are not isolated from the social and economic development of countries and that they cannot be set apart from the need for a favourable international framework for sustained economic growth and sustainable development.]

11. There are critical differences regarding human settlements in different regions and countries and within countries. The differences, specific situations and varying capacities of each community and country need to be taken into account in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action. [International, regional, subregional and national institutional arrangements, including the enhancement of the Commission on Human Settlements and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) as the global focal point and allocation of resources, are central to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.]

12. The Habitat Agenda is a global call to action at all levels. It offers, within a framework of goals and principles and commitments, a positive vision of sustainable human settlements - where all have adequate shelter, a healthy and safe environment, basic services, and productive and freely chosen employment. The Global Plan of Action will guide all efforts to turn this vision into reality.